

State at a Glance: Pennsylvania

Overview

In February 2010, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) awarded grants to 10 States under a 5-year, \$100 million effort to improve health care quality and delivery systems for children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Funded by the [Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 \(CHIPRA\)](#), the [Quality Demonstration Grant Program](#) aims to identify effective, replicable strategies for enhancing quality of care for children. Because some grantee States are partnering with other States, the grants will support the implementation and evaluation of quality improvement strategies for children in a total of 18 States under five broad categories.¹

As one of the 10 grantees, Pennsylvania is implementing projects in three of the five grant categories:

- Showing how a core set of children's quality measures can be used to improve quality of care for children.
- Promoting the use of health information technology (IT) to enhance service quality and care coordination.
- Demonstrating the impact of a model electronic health record (EHR) format for children.

Pennsylvania's Objectives

Pennsylvania will partner with several medical centers and hospitals to collect, test, and report on the initial core set of children's quality measures and implement electronic linkages to promote early identification for children with developmental delay, behavioral health issues, and complex medical conditions. The State will test an electronic screening tool to enhance communication between providers and families and improve screening and referral rates for several clinical domains. Pennsylvania is one of two grantees that will test and evaluate the model EHR format for children.

Working with the Initial Core Set of Children's Quality Measures

Pennsylvania will electronically collect, test, and report on all of the initial set of children's quality measures in seven health systems by the end of the grant. The focus is on gathering core measure data directly from the health systems' EHRs and reporting measures back to practice sites to drive improvement. Pennsylvania will produce practice-specific quality reports, provide hospital level incentives for implementing selected measures, and pay for improvements in quality for a subset of measures. [Geisinger Health System](#) and the [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia \(CHOP\)](#) will be the first systems to implement the measure reporting and will be involved in the pay-for-performance component; the other participating health systems will follow. In addition, Pennsylvania will establish a bidirectional linkage of the health systems to the [Pennsylvania Department of Health's Statewide Immunization Information System](#).

¹ The five categories are projects that (1) show how a core set of children's quality measures can be used to improve quality of care for children, (2) promote the use of health information technology to enhance service quality and care coordination, (3) implement new or more comprehensive provider-based models of service delivery, (4) demonstrate the impact of a model electronic health record format for children, and (5) test an approach to quality improvement of a State's own design.

Using Health IT to Improve Child Health Care Quality

CHOP and Geisinger will implement a pre-clinic visit electronic screening tool for early identification of children with developmental delay, behavioral health needs, and complex medical conditions. Results of the screens and any referrals will be placed directly into the patient's EHR. These efforts will enhance provider and patient communication while planned electronic linkages across the continuum of care will improve coordination between physical and mental health providers, child serving social agencies, and across primary and specialty care.

Testing a Model EHR Format for Children

Five of Pennsylvania's grantee health systems will collaborate with their EHR vendors to implement and test the model format and determine the extent to which EHRs can yield data for calculating the core set of quality measures. In addition, project staff will develop and test other electronic quality improvement projects based on format-compliant EHRs, implement the patient referral/linkage system into EHRs, and link practice sites to the State's Department of Health Immunization Registry through the EHR.

Evaluation Questions

The national evaluation team will gather information from Pennsylvania to address a wide range of questions about the implementation and outcomes of its efforts, including:

- How did Pennsylvania report measures to practices and to what extent did the practices use this information to improve quality of care?
- Did electronic linkages across child-serving sites improve access to services for children with developmental and behavioral concerns?
- What strategies did Pennsylvania use to test the model EHR format for children?
- What are the key lessons from Pennsylvania's experience that would be useful for other States?

Learn More

This information is current as of March 2012, slightly more than 2 years after grant award. To learn more about the projects being implemented in Pennsylvania under the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grant Program, please contact:

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To learn more about the national evaluation of the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grant Program, visit the evaluation's Web page at <http://www.ahrq.gov/chipra/demoeval> or send an email to CHIPRADemoEval@ahrq.hhs.gov.